



## **Kentucky Artisan Center at Berea**

*Tourism, Arts and Heritage Cabinet*

### **Berea College Brooms Demonstration at Kentucky Artisan Center**

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**BEREA, Ky.** – On Saturday, Oct. 13, Berea College senior Jennifer Salyer will demonstrate broom making at the Kentucky Artisan Center at Berea.

Salyer, of Milford, Ohio, is a math education major who also serves as the student manager in broom making at Berea. She has worked in broom craft at the college for three years. Her demonstration will be from 10:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Berea College has more than a century-long tradition of preserving and creating Appalachian folk arts and crafts. The College Student Crafts Program is one of many labor departments and learning environments in which Berea College students work as part of their liberal arts education. Broom craft has been a part of the Berea College Student Craft Program since 1920, when equipment from a broom factory was given to the college.

Berea College brooms are all made from broom corn. A member of the millet family, broom corn, or *sorghum vulgare*, is a tall plant with little foliage and woody stocks. When growing, it looks somewhat like sweet corn and produces bristles laden with seeds rather than an ear of seed. These bristles are processed after drying in multiple ways, depending on how they will be used.

Berea College brooms are all made individually and students learn every step in the process, from shredding the broom corn to the final broom stitching. Some students work in broom craft for their entire college career and become very adept in the techniques required to make the wide variety of brooms the college produces. Braiding is one of the final steps to the finished product, requiring dexterity, practice and skill. These braided endings are a trademark of the Berea College broom craft industry.

Brooms made by Berea College are regularly available at the Kentucky Artisan Center, located at 200 Artisan Way, just off Interstate 75 at Berea exit 77. The center's exhibits, shopping and travel information areas are open daily, year-round, from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m., and the cafe is open from 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Admission is free.

The center currently features works by more than 650 artisans from more than 100 counties across the Commonwealth. A special exhibit, "The Threads that Bind: Textile Works by Kentucky Artisans," will be on display through Feb. 23, 2013. For more information about the center's programming, call 859-985-5448 or visit the center's website [www.kentuckyartisancenter.ky.gov](http://www.kentuckyartisancenter.ky.gov)

The Kentucky Artisan Center at Berea is an agency in the Tourism, Arts and Heritage Cabinet of the Commonwealth of Kentucky.



**Photos left to right:** Braided broom corn adds a finishing touch to Berea College brooms; Several small brooms in the final stages of production alongside a cutting tool.

